

C.M.R.A.

Connecticut Motorcycle Riders Association

Legislative Committee

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The CMRA would like to thank Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero, and all of the Transportation Committee for their time today. The CMRA would like to express opposition to Senate Bill 634 and House Bills 5554 and 6056. All three bills are related to red light cameras. The devices are stated in the bills as being "automated traffic enforcement devices" or "traffic signal enforcement cameras".

The CMRA is in opposition to the bills for the primary reason of lack of consideration for Constitutional "...due process of law". A motorcycle rider will occasionally have to run a red light, without appearing to be flouting the law, because of the intersection "sensors". Some magnetic, motion, or weight sensors do not detect motorcyclists. This is a situation where due process of law is in conflict with technological ticketing. A motorcycle enthusiast would be able to explain and even offer an example to an enforcement agent about the struggle confronted with certain situations involving "sensors". The enforcement cameras would not allow the ability to explain, therefore not allowing a motorcyclist due process of law with a device.

Conversely, it is understood that there are three bills being sponsored regarding safer intersection travel. The motorcycling community has certainly experienced their unfair share of strikes in intersections by those whom are inattentive, careless, inebriated, and/or lacking in common sense in travelling our roadways. Unfortunately, those that do brush-off the law in such manners will not stop doing so even after the devices are installed.

Members of the CMRA have reviewed footage from companies that promise safe intersections with red light cameras. It was concluded that violators will still be unsafe operators behind the wheel. We also witnessed video where people had stopped at green lights. The paranoia of the motoring public has caused more rear end collisions during the first six months of installation, according to many studies. The rear end collision problem has, in certain cases, caused more collision data at some intersections. Intersections that had once been accident free prior to the installation of the devices showed horrible incidents after the installation of the cameras – especially in states with winter conditions exist like in Connecticut.

The main problem with the device is that a violator may or may not receive a ticket in the mail. There are so many products offered that prevent a violator from being ticketed – license plate covers/diffusers, push button plate covers, sprays that distort imaging, and more – that a violator may still be capable of causing harm to others despite the installation of intersection enforcement devices.

According to the Federal Highway Safety Administration and the Insurance Institute of Highway Safety, rear end collision incidences increase by approximately 15% once the devices are

installed. To a motorcycle rider, the idea of this increase of rear end collisions is very chilling. On the other hand, careless and risky lawbreakers in intersections are also unacceptable.

It is hoped by the CMRA that before the state considers the red light cameras for safer intersection travel, that the state may consider other plausible ideas for the flow of traffic in their cities:

- Crossing guards during peak traffic situations – 7 am to 9 am and 3 pm – 6pm (5 hrs per day of part-time municipal work for one year @ \$10/hr = \$13,000 max/per year employing a crossing guard). Crossing guard programs often reach out to local volunteer Veteran's Organizations and/or other disabled citizens groups. (I can tell you from personal experience, there is nothing more intimidating or thought provoking than someone with a cane or in a wheel chair stopping traffic for school children! – Sandra Clark personal note...) There have also been noted situations in the nation where traffic violators had been sentenced to serve community service working with crossing guards – irony! Crossing guards not only assist with preventing motorist problems, but also aide in the prevention of jaywalking. NHTSA offers a wonderful program titled Safe Routes to School (SRTS). Hospitals and other businesses with high volumes of pedestrian traffic from parking area to establishment may consider hiring their own crossing guards.
- Engineers evaluating the timing of yellow lights in intersections: If a roadway speed limit is 25mph, then the yellow light should be approximately 3 seconds long. For each 5mph roadway speed increase, the yellow light should be .5 second longer. If this proposed legislation should be deemed worthy of advancing forth from this Committee, we strongly urge the Committee to retain the legal ability to set the time parameters associated with the yellow light interval in order to prevent this technological process from becoming a revenue generator for the red light camera companies which benefit financially from the issuing of tickets at the expense of CT vehicle operators.
- A pause in intersections where there is a red light in all directions for 1 or 2 seconds allowing all to clear prior to signal change.
- Consideration for signals in Eastbound and Westbound intersections; Are the signals visible in only one position during sunrise and sunset blinding times? If signals were visible in the East and West positions in more locations, up high and down low, fewer accidents might happen in those directions.
- Public Service Announcements that are very graphic help drivers.
- Eliminate turning right on red, where appropriate.
- The cost for an intersection engineering evaluation is much less than the cost of device installation. It is hoped that evaluating intersections, accident information, and crash data prior to camera installation will be considered.
- Are lines well painted on the roadways?
- Are all signs and signals visible? They may have been knocked down by recent storms or neglected.

In Conclusion, the CMRA truly understands the need for safer intersections in CT. It is a concern that a different approach may be considered prior to the costly cameras. What may seem to be an offer of more revenue may prove otherwise. There are States in our Nation that once tried the devices and have since deemed the devices illegal. It is hoped that CT Legislators may ask, "Why?". Should any one of the three bills pass, please consider the struggles of a motorcyclist in regards to a lack of acknowledgement from certain sensing devices. The CMRA agrees that better intersection safety is a concern for our state. The question remains, "Is this the best way to achieve that goal?"